

IMPROVING STUDENTS' VOCABULARY MASTERY THROUGH STORYTELLING

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Abstract

Penelitian ini bertujuan untuk: 1) menganalisis peningkatan dari penguasaan aspek kosa kata siswa menggunakan *storytelling*, 2) mengetahui masalah yang dihadapi siswa dalam mempelajari kosa kata dengan menggunakan *storytelling*. Data dikumpulkan melalui test kosa kata dan wawancara untuk mengetahui masalah yang dihadapi. Hasil penelitian menunjukkan bahwa nilai rata-rata dari *pre-test* adalah 40.62 dan nilai rata-rata dari *post-test* adalah 55.62, dengan nilai penambahan 15. Nilai *t* lebih tinggi dari *t*-tabel ($7.006 > 2.120$), bisa diartikan bahwa hasilnya signifikan ($p < 0.05$). *Storytelling* telah meningkatkan penguasaan kosa kata siswa dalam semua aspek; *nouns* (meningkat 21%), *verbs* (meningkat 17%), *adjectives* (meningkat 13%), dan *adverb* (meningkat 6%). Dilain hal, hasil dari wawancara menunjukkan bahwa para siswa memiliki masalah dengan memahami *adverbs*, menghafalkan jumlah kosa kata, memahami kosa kata yang dikatakan oleh guru, dan pelafalan kata.

This research was aimed at: 1) analyzing the improvement of students' vocabulary aspect *storytelling* through *storytelling*, 2) finding out the problems the students face in learning vocabulary through *storytelling*. The data were obtained from the vocabulary test and interview to find out the problems the students face. The result showed that the students' mean score of the *pre-test* was 40.62 and the mean score of the *post-test* was 55.62, in which their gain score was 15. *Storytelling* technique improved the students' all aspects of vocabulary, such as nouns (21% improved), verbs (17% improved), adjectives (13% improved), and adverbs (6% improved). *T*- value was higher than *t*-table ($7.006 > 2.120$), it can be concluded that the result was significant ($p < 0.05$). Besides that, the result of the interview showed that the students had problem in understanding adverbs, memorizing the number of vocabularies, understanding what words the teacher said, and pronunciation.

Keyword: *storytelling, teaching vocabulary, vocabulary mastery, young learners.*

INTRODUCTION

Language is an important part of communication. In addition, people need to be able to communicate with other people from other countries. They are expected to master more than one language, especially English as the international language. To be able to communicate well, people will need selection of English words known as vocabulary. According to Huyen and Nga (2003, cited in Kaosar, 2012), vocabulary plays an important role in the four skills in learning language. Therefore, it is important for the students to learn vocabulary as the basic competence to learn those four skills in English as Cameron (2001:72) states that vocabulary is a base to the learning of a language at initial level.

Nowadays, English is one of the subject that is taught to young learners in kindergarten. Different techniques are also used by teachers for young learners, such as teaching vocabulary through lists, translation, synonyms, antonyms, contexts, and so on. Unfortunately, the techniques above are not interesting for young learners. Those techniques are too traditional to teach young learners in this globalization era.

Based on the writer's pre-observation in Bunga Mayang Islamic Kindergarten school, it was found that the students got problems in learning English especially vocabulary. First, the students got difficulties to understand the vocabulary that

was learned and the class was not fun and enjoyable since the teacher use conventional technique like translation and memorizing vocabulary lists. Second, to teach vocabulary, teacher's creativities, appropriate methods, and the variation of the activities are required especially for young learners. Harmer (2007) states that teachers of young learners need to spend time understanding how their students think and operate. They need to be able to pick up on their students' current interests so that they can use them to motivate the children. Therefore, it is a challenge for teachers of young learners to think creatively in teaching vocabulary to find activities which provide a fun and enjoyable situation.. It is agreed that if students are learning in a fun and enjoyable situation, it will be easier for them to understand and catch the material. Concerning to that, the use of alternative activities is needed, and storytelling is one of the activity that can be used in teaching vocabulary to young learners. Cameron (2001: 159) states "Stories offer a full imaginary world, created by the language, which allows learners to enter and enjoy as they learn language". From the statement we can conclude that storytelling offers an enjoyable learning situation. In such an enjoyable and fun situation, students may learn better because they will be highly motivated to be involved in teaching learning process. In line with that, Slatterly and Willis (2001) state "Young learners acquire language unconsciously. The activities you do in class should help this kind of acquisition. Stories are the most valuable resource you have. They offer children a world of supported meaning that they can relate to. Later on you can use stories to help children practice listening, speaking, reading, and writing."

The reason for selecting kindergarten students as the subject of this research is because of their beginning position which still needs much attention. Besides that, because they are in the very early beginning period in learning English, their vocabulary achievement should be more concern.

Therefore, based on the explanation above, this research was conducted in the level of kindergarten students in order not only to teach vocabulary in different technique start from very early school, but also to find out students' problem toward the use of storytelling in the teaching of English vocabulary.

RESEACH METHOD

This research was a quantitative study which used *one group pretest-posttest* design. There was one class as the subject of the research which was chosen purposively. The research design was as follows:

T1 X T2

T1: Pre-test.

X: Treatment.

T2: Post-test.

(Setiyadi, 2006:133).

The experimental class was given the treatment of teaching vocabulary through storytelling. The pre-test was administrated before the treatment of teaching vocabulary through storytelling was implemented, to see the students' basic

vocabulary mastery. Then, the treatment of teaching vocabulary through storytelling was implemented. The post-test was administrated afterward, to analyze the improvement of the students' vocabulary mastery achievement through storytelling.

The interview was also conducted in this research. The interview was conducted in the form of open questions and informal types. It was conducted toward some representatives of the students as the interviewees, which were chosen from low and high scores based on the mean score of the post-test, to find out the problems the students face in learning vocabulary through storytelling, in which their answers were classified and generalized as the resource.

RESULT & DISCUSSION

The result of the research showed that the students' vocabulary mastery achievement was improved after being taught through storytelling at Bunga Mayang Islamic Kindergarten School Bandar Lampung. The students' mean score after being taught through storytelling was increased better and significantly. The students' mean score of the pre-test was 40.62; meanwhile, their mean score of the post-test after being taught through storytelling was 55.62, in which their gain score was 15. Based on the finding, it can be seen from the students' mean score of the pre-test and post-test that there was a significant improvement before and after being taught through storytelling. Specifically, storytelling improved the students' vocabulary mastery in all aspects of vocabulary, such as nouns, verbs, adjectives and adverbs. Moreover, storytelling mostly improved the students'

vocabulary mastery in nouns, in which their achievement in that aspect was 21% improved significantly.

There were many possible factors that contributed to the effectiveness of storytelling in learning vocabulary. The factors related to the stories' selection, the use of story aids and the words' repetition during the storytelling.

Firstly, the stories' selection. The stories' selection was a crucial thing that needs to be prepared well before the storytelling treatments began. Therefore, there were some criteria considered by the teacher in choosing stories.

The teacher selected the stories by considering the criteria proposed by Wright (1995). The stories used were suitable with the students' level and age, so that the students enjoyed the stories while they were learning. Additionally, the stories also were relevant with the learning material, so it helped the students to achieve the learning objectives. Besides, the selected stories also contained noun vocabularies closely related to the students' daily life. As in "Kev gets ready to school" story, there were the nouns such as *book, pencil and bag*. Thus, the selection of the stories plays an important role in storytelling, the stories must cover the students' need and is interesting at the same time.

Secondly, the media. As stated before that there were several story aids used while delivering the stories, i.e. pictures, gestures and realia. Based on the

observation, those story aids were very helpful for the students in understanding the stories. Once the students did not understand the meaning of words mentioned by the teacher, the pictures, the teacher's gestures or realia helped them a lot, so that they would still understand the stories. It is similar to Harmer's (2001) statement that children's understanding comes not only from explanation, but also from what they see, hear and touch. Therefore, the use of story aids in the storytelling is very helpful for students' understanding to the story.

Thirdly, words' repetition. Words' repetition is one of the story's features which is very helpful for language learning (Cameron, 2001). According to the observation during the treatments, the repetition of words in the story helped the students a lot in memorizing words learned. Once a word mentioned more times and the story aids showed at the same time, it made the students easier in understanding and memorizing the word. This is in line with Elley's ((1989); cited in Cameron 2001) statement that the word learning correlated significantly with the number of times word's occurrences in the story.

Above all, it can be concluded that the storytelling is effective in improving vocabulary mastery of the kindergarten students 5 to 6 years old. Therefore, storytelling can be used as an alternative teaching technique in teaching vocabulary to young learners.

Besides that, Based on the result of observation and interview, the problems that the students faced in learning vocabulary through storytelling were found. The

interview result shows that some students thought that the use of storytelling in learning vocabulary was confusing. It was because the stories were delivered to the students bilingually, the teacher mixed English and Indonesian. The students may be confused when they hear unfamiliar words mentioned during the storytelling. Then, the problems that came from the material were too many vocabularies to learn for lower level students.

As it has been stated by Hiebert and Kamil (2005:96), some factors that can influence learners in mastering vocabulary are the number of words that learners need to learn so as to understand and use with proficiency both oral and written language, the gap between learners' knowledge about words with the unfamiliar words they should learn, and the use of words-consciousness toward learners.

Furthermore, the students faced the problems of understanding adverbs. The use of strategy was run well to teach noun, verb, and adjectives, but not for adverb. This might be also the problem for their difficulties in understanding the use of the adverb. As Kowalsky (2009) says that adverbs are less substantive and which have to be learned in nonostensive ways.

From the discussion above, to minimize the problem in teaching vocabulary through Storytelling, the teacher should know well about the procedure of teaching vocabulary through storytelling, such as the teacher should master the way of teaching vocabulary through storytelling. In addition, teacher also should give more practice in pronounce the words. Meanwhile, to minimize the problem

in teaching vocabulary through storytelling, teacher should clarify the meaning of the words and speak more clearly to students to help students to follow the story. Here, teacher also should give more practice in pronunciation and asked students to listen carefully so that they could catch what teacher said and found out the words in the story.

CONCLUSION

After conducting the research in the B2 Class of Bunga Mayang Islamic Kindergarten School Bandar Lampung and analyzing the data, the conclusions are drawn as follows:

1. There was significant improvement of the students' vocabulary mastery after being taught through storytelling. It was proved by the increase of the students' mean score in the post-test which was higher than in the pre-test. Their post-test score increased from 40.62 to 55.62 in which the gain was 15 specifically.
2. There were several factors contributing to the effectiveness of the storytelling: the stories' selection, the use of story aids and the words' repetition in the stories.
3. There were some problems the students faced in learning macro skills of listening comprehension through English songs which could be divided as follow:

- a. Problems from students:
 - Understanding the story
 - Memorizing the number of vocabularies
 - Understanding what words the teacher said
 - Pronunciation
- b. Problem from materials: the teaching material contains too many difficult words.

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